



# Senator Stephen Johnson



A Legislative update to the people of the 47th Legislative District

## Dear Neighbor,

The 2002 Legislative session is proving to be one with many challenges, so I wanted to share with you some of the key issues I'm concentrating on this year. I hope you'll take the time to read this letter and call or e-mail my office with suggestions or concerns.

I think you'll agree our state is at a critical juncture, with transportation and budget problems looming large. But these are not problems without solutions, and I'm committed to working with my colleagues to point Washington in the right direction.

Below I have outlined some of the key issues this session. If you have an idea or a comment about any of these issues or are concerned about another issue, feel free to contact me at 1-800-562-6000 or [Johnson\\_st@leg.wa.gov](mailto:Johnson_st@leg.wa.gov).

## Budget

As our state struggles to pull from the grips of the recession we've been feeling since last summer, I agree with the governor that the budget must be balanced without new general taxes. People have seen enough strain on their budgets during the past year, and I won't vote for a budget that makes it worse.

At the same time, we do have a \$1.2 billion problem to take care of. Instead of relying on risky funding sources like the governor's plan, I support budget solutions that take a tough look at how government is operated. A hiring freeze of non-essential employees coupled with a 25 percent reduction in spending on miscellaneous goods and services could save millions of dollars. I feel the voters want government to find a better way of spending their money and this would be a way to do it.

## Transportation

The transportation legislation under consideration this year can be put into three categories.

First, there are a series of bills, some coming from the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission, addressing the issue of how to get more value out of our transportation dollars. Some examples include simplifying the permitting process and requiring projects be prioritized based on congestion relief. Those bills have my strong support and are an important first step.

Second, there is a bill creating a regional plan for selecting projects and resources for significant projects in King, Pierce and Snohomish counties. That plan would be presented to the voters for approval. This solution must be fair and balanced in both the package of projects and array of revenue options. I'm working to guarantee such a plan includes SR 167 as a priority for transportation funding. I hope this plan will prove to be worthy of support by those of us in the 47th District.

Third, a package of statewide taxes and projects are also under consideration. Most proposals, including the governor's plan, raise the gas tax for the first time since 1991 and contain other revenue options. Southeast King County must benefit from such a plan, and the tax package must be approved by a public vote. Recent initiatives have clearly demonstrated the public's demand to vote on significant tax increases. I believe that if a plan is fair and reasonable, the public will make a wise choice for the viable future of our state.

## Auto Theft

Vehicle thefts are continuing to rise at an alarming rate, resulting in more of the dangerous car chases, which risk the lives of our police officers and citizens. That's why I'm supporting new legislation to increase the penalties for car theft offenders. It's time we started taking these criminals off of the streets instead of sending them back out with a slap on the wrist to steal again.

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## United We Stand

The events of September 11 unified our nation as Americans across the country came together to show the world the strength of freedom and democracy. People are flying more flags in front of their homes. That's why I'm sponsoring a new bill to provide Washington's citizens with another way to display their patriotism: on their vehicle. I'm proposing the creation of a new custom license plate for Washington's drivers. The plate would be similar in appearance to the average license plate, but would have a small American flag and the words "United We Stand" across the bottom. Self-expression is one of our great rights as an American and this would be a patriotic way to do it.



Proposed patriotic license plate

## 2002 District Day

Once again this year, residents of the 47th District have a chance to see government in action on February 18, President's Day. The 47th District Day begins with a tour of the state capitol and allows constituents to meet with their lawmakers in person to share their thoughts and ideas. I think this day is important for state government, since it gives us such a great chance to learn more about the issues people feel the most passion for. I do hope you'll try to attend, and for more information or to R.S.V.P. you can contact my office at (360) 786-7692.

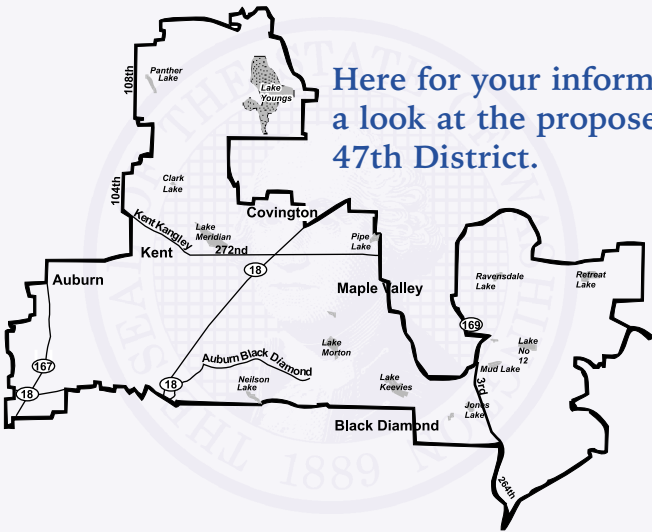
In closing, I'd encourage you to keep up to date on the latest issues being discussed in Olympia. Your feedback and suggestions only help in my development as an advocate for the 47th District.

Sincerely,

Sen. Steve Johnson

## Keep In Touch

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Here for your information is  
a look at the proposed new  
47th District.



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